CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

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Graduate Studies News

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Dean Szabo presenting Xerox Canada Inc. Award to John Redstone

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From the Dean's Desk

As we are entering the festive season, my thoughts turn to the many graduate students who have come to us from more than sixty countries over the last twenty years because of the opportunities for personal advancement which Concordia offers to the world community. These students have helped and are helping to expand the academic influence and responsibility of Concordia far beyond our national borders. It is therefore particularly appropriate to recognize the outstanding contribution of our international students to the life and success of Concordia in general and to the Concordia Graduate Students' Association in particular. In their new pleasant surroundings on Mackay Street, the active members of the G.S.A. have succeeded in creating a sense of community for many of our three thousand graduate students, an undertaking that is so vital for Concordia because of our two-campus reality. In the next few years, Concordia will expand its participation in activities of higher learning and research in designated foreign countries and the Graduate Students' Association will play a major role in providing a home away from home for many of the new students who will join us here in Montreal.

I would like to thank the many colleagues who have written to support the concept of an "Annual Lecture on Research and Teaching". To date we have received the names of over fifty scholars who could serve as animators for this event. In January, I will invite those who have submitted suggestions to a short gathering to plan the details of this event. The lecture will then be publicized in the **Graduate Studies News, The Thursday Report,** and in the media at large. There is still time for further suggestions and comments.

In the first issue of the **News,** I announced the formation of a Committee for Women in Graduate Studies to raise the level of consciousness concerning the special needs and interests of women graduate students. While many members of the University were skeptical of joining just another committee, they were nevertheless enthusiastic about the goal of such an organization. We have therefore now in place a structure and a dedicated group of participants that we simply refer to as Women in Graduate Studies. This group is currently preparing specific events for 1987 to make Concordia a leader in women's graduate studies and that will promote the acceptance of curricular principles that reflect our commitment to the cause of women.

During the last six months, the Graduate Studies Office has gone though a period of major organizational and managerial change in an effort to become more effective and responsive to the needs of the University. Our staff, introduced to you individually in the September Issue of the **News**, have come through this difficult period with flying colours and I am taking this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to this outstanding team. We are systematically expanding our capacity to provide relevant and up-to-date information to all interested sectors of Concordia about our programs and the administration of our programs. We are improving our student services, expanding our capacity to serve programs and program administrators, and are increasing our visibility across Canada. We are particularly committed to attracting excellent graduate students in all areas and in strengthening the support system for such

students. Our close collaboration with the Office of the Associate Vice-Rector for Research is a cause for particular joy in this connection.

The responsibility for the quality and expansion of our graduate programs resides with the Board of Graduate Studies, a university-wide elected body whose faculty members serve the graduate community in rotating three-year intervals. This year we have once again an exciting blend of enthusiasm, vision, and realism represented on the Board which makes the process of planning for the future and that of managing the present a rewarding experience. I would like to thank all members of the Board for their dedication and thoughtful and vigorous contributions. Because of their imagination and support, 1987 will be a busy year for those of us engaged in the process of improving and developing all aspects of graduate studies.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

The Doctoral Program in Religion

This is a time when chroniclers of the era can easily cite instances of crumbling morality, lost values and a withering away of the role of religion in our lives. But the Department of Religion at Concordia disputes this analysis as superficial and argues that religion is as vital a force as it ever was.

"We have found that it is both more important and more interesting to explore the ways that religion has continued to play an influential role in many areas of social and cultural life, rather than to just document the opposed reduction and compartmentalization of religion in our time," a department document states. "The persistent impact of religion in the modern period begins to be uncovered when this investigation of behavior is maintained."

Religion in the modern world is a major focus of Concordia's religion department, particularly in its doctoral program, which boasts some of the brightest students and professors in the field today.

The Ph.D. program, established in 1973, falls into two streams: Comparative Ethics and Judaic Studies. Each has its own focus: Comparative Ethics concentrates on the cross-cultural study of behavioral norms, including how these norms are arrived at, communicated, legitimized, and changed; Judaic Studies looks closely at specific areas in the religious and cultural development of Judaism. Both sections maintain as a central theme the relationship between religion and modernity, and are comparative in scope and multi-disciplinary in method.

In order to allow faculty and students the time to devote themselves fully to their studies the department has made the acquisition of financial support one of its highest priorities. One major source of funds is the team research grants won by faculty and used to support graduate student research. In the last six years the department has won more than $600,000 in such grants, and approximately ninety percent of that money has gone directly to graduate students. The Ph.D program at Concordia can accomodate about forty students, half of whom are full-time. Including the three teaching assistants who receive grants through the department, a total of between twenty-five and thirty students receive financial support every year, the majority of these are at the doctoral level.

The department has used this $600,000 in grants — provided by the two major outside granting agencies, the FCAR and SSHRC — to fund major research efforts into a wide spectrum of topics: new religious movements in Montreal; family and sexual ethics; ritual activities among families and religious congregations; the role of women leaders in religious movements within Canada; the response of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism to the emergence of the philosophy of religion; and the relationship of religion and violence.

The department sees faculty research as a central part of the doctoral program and believes competent graduate teaching, especially at the doctoral level, can only be accomplished by professors who are active researchers.

Doctoral seminar class in Religion with Professor Fred Bird. (Lower right hand corner of blackboard.)

While studies provide students with training to help develop their skills in preparing theses and dissertations, the annual colloquia series run by the department has produced papers worthy of publication. The papers often have a central focus, and in 1979, when that theme was Method and Theory in Comparitive Ethics, the papers were collected and later published (1981) as one volume in the prestigious *Journal of Religious Ethics.*

The department produces an average of six books a year, and in the past twelve months more than seven books have been published. As well, anywhere from three to ten articles are published annually in learned journals and periodicals. All this was accomplished by only ten full-time faculty members.

This is not so surprising when you consider that many faculty members — particularly Professor Charles Davis, Professor Michel Despland and Associate Professor Fred Bird — are well-known and respected throughout North America and Europe.

The students are no slouches either. The department does its best to recruit superior graduate students and sees evidence of the high calibre of its students in the number of fellowships they win annually in national, provincial and university-wide competitions. These competitions are only open to full-time students, and of the twenty-odd students who qualify, anywhere from four to seven students regularly receive fellowships from the SSHRC, FCAR, and Concordia itself.

The department provides doctoral students with a wide range of experience in the academic world. Senior Ph.D students often work as part-time lecturers, have articles published in respected journals, and participate in meetings of the Canadian Learned Societies. Concordia graduate students also represent a large contingent of those who present papers at the annual meetings of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion.

While a Ph.D in religion does not guarantee an immediate job, graduates of the Concordia program have done well. Faculty work actively to place graduates in university jobs, and many of these graduates have found good positions at Canadian universities.

Graduate Programs at the Centre for Building Studies

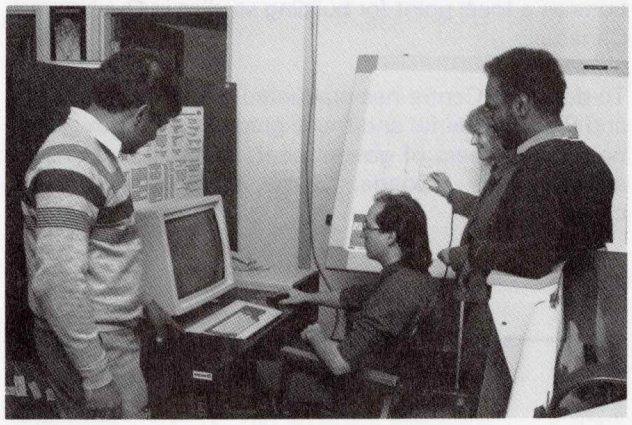
The graduate programs in building engineering offered at Concordia University's Centre for Building Studies (CBS) are unique in Canada being the only programs to train graduates in both the technical as well as the human aspects of building design, construction and operation.

The Centre for Building Studies provides an environment where graduate students in both the Master's and doctoral programs can become acquainted with the needs of the industry, and concentrate their research efforts on creating more economical buildings that provide greater comfort and result in higher worker productivity.

The Centre offers two graduate level programs — a Master's of Engineering and a Ph.D. in Building Studies. The research work in these two programs focuses on building science, building environment, construction management and building structures.

Research at the Centre is geared to meet the needs of industry and it has been successfully carrying out product evaluation and development for many years now. This transfer of information between industry and the Centre for Building Studies has created a mutually fruitful working relationship that has attracted significant external funding from various sources. In 1986, these funds totalled $1.5 million and were used to develop special laboratory facilities, supplement graduate fellowships and improve services to industry.

Students and faculty involved in research have access to some of the best engineering laboratories in the country. One recent addition to these facilities is a laboratory for computer-aided design. SIRICON (Société d'Information de Recherche dans l'Industrie de la Construction) was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1985 to develop software and other computer applications for the construction industry.



CBS graduate students: S. Saravanabavan (l. standing), M. Nicholas (r. standing), L. Gelinas (back standing), and staff member I. Mackintosh (sitting) in the CAD laboratory.

SIRICON is an asset to graduate students providing them with a working model of a small consulting firm and giving them the opportunity to work and conduct research for their theses in this milieu. It also allows them access to equipment to which they might not otherwise have had access to, and provides them with the industry contacts that SIRICON services .

Other laboratories at the Centre for Building Studies include those for: building acoustics; building performance; building materials; building aerodynamics; thermal analysis; thermal insulating materials; and energy conservation and thermal environment.

The central focus of research at the Centre covers four areas: energy consumption and savings; thermal comfort; improvement of the building envelope; and productivity. The Centre has secured $792,000 over a five-year period from the provincial government to develop computerized tools for architects, engineers and contractors in these four areas. The tools include computer-aided design programs for structural performance; programs for energy consumption and savings; expert systems for energy management and mechanical systems; and construction productivity.

A number of new building products are under development, such as a prototype of energy-storing gypsum wallboard. Under a contract with Energy, Mines and Resources, Canada, a team of researchers, involved in passive solar applications and building product development at the Centre have come up with a new wallboard that can store heat when temperatures rise above a certain point and release the heat when temperatures drop. It is expected that the cost of the wallboard will compare favourably with traditional products, yet will save homeowners an estimated twenty-five percent on heating and cooling costs. Graduate students have been involved in development of this product.

This illustrates how the Centre serves industry as well as graduate students involved in research on industry-related projects. The Centre for Building Studies and its graduate programs are clearly consolidating their positions as a focal point for building studies in Quebec and Canada.

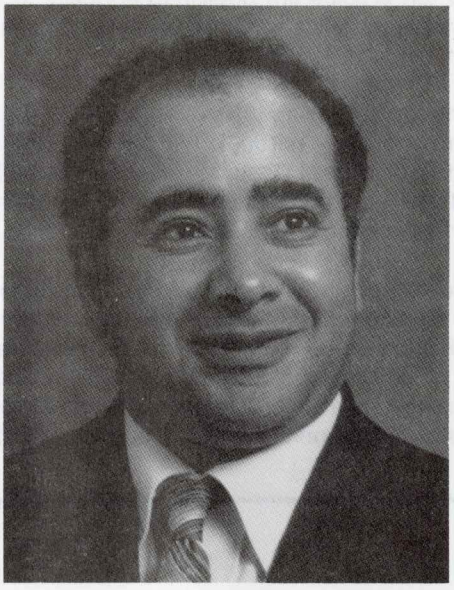
To-date, the Centre has graduated ninety-two Master's and Ph.D. students and these graduates are now functioning members of government, industry and universities across Canada. Some have started new companies.

Award Winners Celebrate

On October 24th an early evening reception was held by the Dean of Graduate Studies in honour of Concordia graduate students currently holding scholarships. Representatives from Alcan and Royal Trust made presentations at the reception. Mrs. Edith Harris met and congratulated this year's winner of the Bessie Schulich Fellowship and Dean Szabo presented the Xerox Canada Inc. Award to John Redstone (see photo). Students, faculty and staff members from Concordia attended, as well as executives from several related associations. The general mood of this event was celebratory and many guests remarked on how much they enjoyed themselves.

Graduate Profile

Mumtaz B. Gawargy



Mumtaz B. Gawargy completed his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering at Concordia this past September, and he says he considers Concordia one of the best universities around in the field of circuits and systems. He has special praise for professors involved in that specialization, particularly M.N.S. Swamy, Dean of Engineering; and V. Ramachandran. He also credits Dr. M.E. Szabo, Dean of Graduate Studies, with making special arrangements for his thesis defense and appreciates the discreet handling of confidential information presented in the thesis.

Dr. Gawargy, 44, is a native of Mallawy, Egypt. He received his B.Sc. (Honours) from Assuit University in 1965 and went on to complete his M.Sc. at Cairo University in 1976, and his Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering at Concordia University in 1986.

As a student, Dr. Gawargy was awarded a five-year undergraduate fellowship in Egypt, a six-week United Nations tour of hydraulics research laboratories in India, and the David J. Azrieli Fellowship from Concordia in 1978.

Dr. Gawargy worked with the Water Research Centre in Egypt from 1965 to 1976, and since 1978 has been with Bell Northern Research in Ottawa as a member of their scientific staff. His present activities include developing and presenting training courses for silicon chip design and simulation.

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